OUR VISITORS

This evening we extend a particularly cordial welcome to our near neighbours and very good friends from Cheltenham for the second of three matches with them again this season.

KINGSHOLM KACKLE

Time was when fixtures between Gloucester and Cheltenham were viewed with suspicion by the rugger enthusiasts. All too often they were what is colloquially termed "dog fights"; unspectacular and unsavoury scrambles, with players scratching around, violently on occasions, for a ball that might just as well have not been there.

But the wind of change has wafted considerably over these local "derbies" if last season's memorable encounter at Kingsholm is any criterion, though the intense rivalry is still there, of course.

In that exciting match—probably the finest ever between City and Town—on Thursday evening, September 12th, 1968, a magnificent dropped goal by Tom Palmer in the dying minutes enabled Gloucester to gain a thrilling victory by 19 points to 17. The lead, one may recall, changed hands five times and "Chelters" came within an inch, or rather, a few seconds, of taking the Cherry and Whites' unbeaten record.

Apart from Palmer's last-ditch dropped goal, Gloucester's points came from tries by Ron Gwillim and John Groves (wonder what the little fellow's doing now !) with Eric Stephens converting both and kicking two penalties.

Mike Virgo and Tony Osman crossed for Cheltenham, Bob Redwood making the conversion, while Keith Howe (2) and Dave Hanna landed penalty goals.

There were few complaints about the splendid county match at Kingsholm last Saturday, and if Gloucestershire were given some worrying moments by the speedy Devon backs, they at least earned their further step towards the South-West group title.

Should they win it they have to travel to meet the champions of the Southern group—not yet known, though Berkshire are well placed—in the quarter-final.

Gloucester's away fixture with Aberavon, originally arranged for Saturday, has been brought forward to Friday evening because of the Swansea game against the Springboks. Next Wednesday there is another long journey for Gloucester, who meet Cambridge University at Grange Road.

On Saturday, November 22nd, when Gloucestershire meet Somerset at Bridgwater, the visitors to Kingsholm will be Lydney. A.R.